

Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 165683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, IN

SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

REF: USNATO 3659

1. IN RESPONSE REFTEL REQUEST, FOLLOWING IS LATEST INR
ANALYSIS FOR YOUR USE IN NATO:

2. BEGIN TEXT: PRIME MINISTER GANDHI HAS ACTED IN THE
PAST WEEK TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES WHICH ARE REQUIRED,
UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, TO LEGITIMIZE A STATE OF EMERGENCY.

3. CONVENING OF PARLIAMENT: THE PRESIDENT HAS SUMMONED
PARLIAMENT INTO SESSION ON JULY 21, AND IT IS EXPECTED TO
SIT FOR ABOUT A WEEK. INASMUCH AS THE CONGRESS (R) PARTY
HAS A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, PARLIAMENT PROBABLY WILL ACT TO:

(A)--RATIFY THE EMERGENCY POWERS, THEREBY PROVIDING THE
GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTIONAL SANCTION FOR THE STATE OF EMER-
GENCY AND ALSO THE OPTION OF DELAYING ELECTIONS (NOW
SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 1976) FOR ONE YEAR FROM THE TIME
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THE DELAY IS ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT;

(B)--PASS LEGISLATION ON THE "NEW" ECONOMIC PACKAGE
ANNOUNCED BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. PARLIAMENT MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO STRENGTHEN THE POWERS OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, MRS. GANDHI HAS STATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITHIN THE PAST WEEK THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT HAVE TOLERATED "IRRESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION," SUGGESTING THAT GREATER GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE EXPRESSION OF DISSENT MIGHT ALSO BE WRITTEN INTO THE CONSTITUTION.

5. POSSIBLE CHALLENGE FROM THE COURTS: SUPREME COURT JUSTICE IYER, WHO ISSUED THE CONDITIONAL STAY OF THE ALLAHABAD COURT VERDICT AGAINST MRS. GANDHI, HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS FROM TWO PROMINENT OPPOSITION CRITICS ARRESTED UNDER THE EMERGENCY. IN EFFECT, HE THUS CHALLENGED THE PRESIDENTIAL ORDER REMOVING PETITIONS FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FROM COURT REVIEW.

6. THE SUPREME COURT MEETS ON JULY 14 TO TAKE UP THE REVIEW OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S APPEAL. IF THE JUDGMENT GOES AGAINST HER, WE BELIEVE THAT MRS. GANDHI, BUTTRESSED BY PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OF THE EMERGENCY, WILL TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS ARE REQUIRED TO REMAIN IN POWER, INCLUDING SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTION ENTIRELY.

7. AN ADVERSE JUDGMENT BY THE COURT WOULD CAST DOUBT ON HER LEGITIMACY IN THE MINDS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE MILITARY, AND HER OWN PARTY--INSTITUTIONS WHICH SHE NEEDS TO ENFORCE THE EMERGENCY. AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE OF SERIOUS OPPOSITION WITHIN THESE THREE INSTITUTIONS TO HER CONTINUED RULE.

8. MOBILIZING PUBLIC SUPPORT: THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO:

(A)--STOPPED IMPOUNDING WAGE INCREASES; THIS ACTION IS THE FIRST OF A PROJECTED SERIES OF POPULIST ECONOMIC MEASURES;
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(B)--CONDONED, IF NOT ENCOURAGED, A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN ON THE ALLEGED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DANGERS THAT NECESSITATED THE EMERGENCY.

9. THE PRIME MINISTER IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD A GROUP OF INDUSTRIALISTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PURSUE A "CENTRIST" ECONOMIC POLICY. SHE THUS SIGNED THAT NO RADICAL REORIENTATION OF ECONOMIC POLICY IS CONTEMPLATED AND THAT THERE WILL BE NO THREAT TO THE POSITION OF BIG BUSINESS, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MAJOR PROPS OF THE RULING CONGRESS. HOWEVER, THE STRESS ON CENTRISM WILL PROBABLY INHIBIT THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP THE URBAN POOR AND RURAL LANDLESS LABOR.

10. OPPOSITION REGROUPING: THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION, WHICH HAD INITIALLY APPEARED IMMOBILIZED BY MRS. GANDHI'S OFFENSIVE, NOW SHOWS THE FIRST SIGNS OF ORGANIZING RESISTANCE:

(A)--THE DMK PARTY, THE RULING PARTY IN TAMILNADU, STAGED A MAMMOTH RALLY IN MADRAS, REPORTED AS ONE OF THE LARGEST EVER HELD IN THE CITY, AT WHICH TAMILNADU'S CHIEF MINISTER ASKED THE GATHERING TO PLEDGE "TO PROTECT INDIAN DEMOCRACY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN ANY EVENTUALITY."

(B)--REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE CADRE OF THE MILITANT HINDU RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH, WHO HAVE GONE UNDERGROUND SINCE THEIR ORGANIZATION WAS BANNED, PLAN TO COURT ARREST THROUGH A SERIES OF STAGED PROTESTS.

(C)--THE BIHAR STATE COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTIES REPORTEDLY PLANS TO STAGE SIT-INS, FASTS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS AT GOVERNMENT OFFICES.
END TEXT. INGERSOLL

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